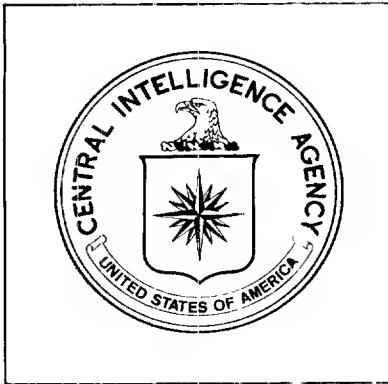


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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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North Yemen

Hamdi Launches Modernization Effort

Command Council Chairman Ibrahim Hamdi has launched his drive to modernize and upgrade both North Yemen's political framework and its government bureaucracy.

In a speech delivered to several thousand tribesmen in an area west of Sana on October 16, Hamdi made his harshest attack yet on Yemen's social system. Calling on the tribesmen to all but repudiate their tribal leaders and social system, Hamdi exhorted them to help Yemen become a strong nation politically and economically. He accused the tribal sheikhs of using fraudulent methods to monopolize economic and political power, and said they cared for little "beyond filling their stomachs and lining their pockets."

On the same day, the Supreme Committee for Financial and Administrative Reform, which Hamdi established last month, suspended the government's civil service commission. Former members of the commission will be investigated to determine if charges of mismanagement are true. The reform committee plans to organize a new body that is supposed to carry out the civil service commission's functions more effectively. The reform committee also plans to create subordinate groups throughout the government bureaucracy and country.

The US embassy in Sana reports that reaction to the reform committee's actions is mixed. Some members of the committee are themselves vulnerable to charges of corruption. Government employees believe the entire bureaucracy has been unfairly prejudged as corrupt. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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